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ACHIEVEMENT: POEMS

BY

SAMUEL JAMES LEWIS

AND HERBERT H. C. EVERETT

ACHIEVEMENT
A BOOK OF POEMS

...BY...

SAMUEL JAMES LEWIS
and
HERBERT H. C. EVERETT.

Sweet are the pleasures that to verse belong,
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song.—*Keats*.

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H. H. C. E.
to
P. M. M. F.



S. J. L. _
to
J. S. P.





Faith.

Love, you say that faith is brittle,
And that yours is wearing thin;
And you think I love too little,
That I live a secret sin?

O, I love you more than ever,—
Still, despite my heart's command,
You and I, my wife, may sever,—
We cannot all understand.

But remember you once told me
That true love is faith,—O love,
Let your faith return, enfold me
For our little one above.

Alone.

I wait upon thy call, alone, alone,
My Sweetheart, now that thou art gone!
Nay, not again your passionate caress
May teach me of the light of life
For now thy memory is my life.
The memory of that kiss,
That last sweet touch of thee—
It plays about my lips
A taste that lingers thro' the gall of now.
And O, your voice, that farewell at the gate—
We did not know, my Sweet, 'twould be the
last—
With all the garden bowing low to you,
The last sweet music that is gone.
Now all is discord, all is tears.
Do you remember in the garden that good-night?
I turned about, as down the stony road
I meditated on my homeward steps
Tears swelling thro' my love and joy,
For you had told me that our love was one;
I asked my God what I had done thus to be
given
Such innocence to mar as thine,

Mar with my manhood's strength
A flower so delicate that only love
Of angels should enfold it.
God heard me then and pondered on my thought,
Believed me right, and took thee to himself.—
But O, 'tis hard, my God, 'tis hard!

Yea, I may now mourn o'er thy mound
That lies midst the eternal colony of men,
Beneath a stone, and near the stream
That ever sings the dirge for all who rest there.
And kneeling on the slab

I shall be with you and shall plant
A red, red rose upon your head, and ev'ry ev'n
At dusk shall kiss its petals—they will be your
lips,

Your lips in death—and you shall talk, my Sweet,
The soft tones heard to none but me.

Then you shall teach me all the ways
Of Heaven, so that I may fit myself
To join you; and when God has seen
That I am purged of earth,

He will release me, free me from the chains,
And I shall lie

Beside you in the church yard near the stream.

Gone, gone!
Can I believe it? But I must, I must:
God takes the pure and leaves the ill to cleanse—
I shall be clean, soon, Sweetheart, soon,
Then we may merge our spirits into one,
And thou shalt sing the holy song of love
Amid the angels, as you did of yore
When the bright sunlight romped about your
 head,
And honeysuckle loved to bend back from the
 porch
Above you, listening, to drop down a kiss,
The essence of its sweetness, in a pearl.
And you would laugh, O, such a happy laugh
When I walked thro' the dusk beneath the trees
Up to the gate, and leap into my arms;
And I atremble feared to touch your lips
Till you would pout me to it,
And then the world would fade, and only thou
 wert there.
But thou art gone, my love!—then pray thy God
That I may wait not long; not long
The tides of being in me ebb;
And that soon may I join thee with the dead,
Beside thee in the church yard near the stream,
And with thy spirit in Heaven,
For, Sweet, I am alone, alone.

Autumn's Flight.

Keener odours linger now
Upon the laden apple-bough
Than when in summer's sunny prime
The pink and white of flower-time
Arrayed the tree in fragile glory :
Ended is the summer-story.
For with fulfillment of the year
Departing Autumn seems to hear
Thro' the darkening forest old,
In the night-wind blowing cold,
Sighing in the tree-tops sear,
Moaning o'er the meadows drear,
Sounds, her hour of parting knelling,
Dimly mutt'ring, ever swelling ;
Sounds that herald Winter's coming :
Reed-birds in the marshes drumming,
Twitt'ring swallows southward flying,
Brooks in murmurs dying.

Faded now are summer flowers,
Swifter move the ripening hours,

And new harmonies arise
In the woodland fanes ;
Broad-arch'd with sunset-radiant skies,
Cleansed by summer rains ;
And reaping-hook and sickle swing,
Blithe maidens songs of harvest sing,
And their sweet joyous melodies
(Such songs as youthful laughter fills)
Clear-borne upon the hearty breeze
Deep among the darkening hills
Die away in failing echoes ;
One parting glance she backward throws,
A moment hovers on her wings :
Then, as the wakening wind down-flings
Dead leaf and wither'd rose,
Rich Autumn whispers her farewell ;
And like the tones of some sweet bell
Faint-flung from hoary mountain-side
O'er a peaceful river,
As echoes into silence glide,
Dies away forever.

The Vision.

The snow was falling thick and deep,
The wide street pillowed in white sleep,
When thro' the silent night there came
A hurrying form that stopped my breathing
still;
So like it was to thine, thy name
Slid forth against my will.

Away fled thought of injury,
My eager face leaned forth to thee
With breathless trembling, and my heart
Rushed to the lips and eyes with blinding tears;
A word, a look-and far apart
We were, despair knelled in my ears.

It was not thou ; and since come fast
And crowding, memories of the past :
Aloft with thee I seem to float,
Thy hand in mine, thy breast stirred with my
 sighs,
The choking tears come in my throat,
A crimson mist before my eyes.

And in my dreams I rise, start up,
Stretch forth my hands to drain the cup
Thy hands hold out, and wake to cry
Upon thy name, and hunger for the peace
Of silence for my agony
And pray for swift release.

Ah ! when shall after weary days,
And drudging thro' long bitter ways,
Thine eyes again shine full in mine,
Thine arms again lock round me shy yet free ?
When taste again thy lips new wine,
When com'st thou back to me ?

Christmas Day.

'Tis not the day, but 'tis the custom of it,
Because it swings around each year
A pendulum of joy, that we must love it
And touch it on in its career.

And this grand, ancient clock of Christmas
tide
Was wound by faith of long ago,
That yet will wind while hearts in joy abide,
In what faith teaches them to know.

Hark to the strokes that come in cheery
chime
Bringing the heart an old refrain,
Still gifting faith with an old, humble rhyme
That echoes yet again, again!

Illusion.

Her voice was used to sing to me,
Like low-heard laughter ring to me,
 As tho' from far-off hill-tops sang
Sweet flights of chimes with anthems clear,
 And thro' long sloping woodlands rang,
Before the notes came to my ear.

But now her voice for ages long
Is hushed to me, and still'd her song;
 The thin-worn memory of it even
Is slipping from me, so that I
 As tho' a cry were still'd in heaven,
Hear but lost echoes of a sigh.

Yet whiles, at blessed times, methinks
Good spirits hear me, and there sinks
 Upon me peace, so that I wait,
Listening with attention strained,
 A beggar kneeling at the gate
Of Hope, that sees my wish attained.

For as I listen thus, the air
Grows fresher, and the earth more fair;
 The sighing swells, and down the wind
From far unearthly bournes where she
 Pines out her eyes (I wept mine blind),
Come words of comfort down to me.

And thro' the valley floats her voice
To bid her lover's heart rejoice;
 Freshly bubbling laughter wells
Like hidden water, and her art
 Pours ghostly music thro' the dells
And fills with singing my poor heart.

Life.

I come from the dark and struggling lie
In the cool of a Spring-like age,
In the lap of the soft caressing eye
Of a mother's heritage.

I out-grow the garment of Spring-time fast,
And dash on a panting race,
But Summer-heat covers me over at last,
And I cannot keep the pace.

My life grows ripe on the Autumn wing,
For I tuned my heart to Joy's;
The harvested leaves become buds of the Spring,
But the ghost of the Winter annoys.

I sit by the grate of a Winter fire,
And soothe my soul with the flame;
I see in the glow my funeral pyre—
For soon I shall go whence I came.

Evening.

Rose-red flushes up the western sky
And lightly the first chill of night
Strides o'er the meadow, and the earth-sounds
die

Slowly away, and grows the white-faced
moon

Half-hesitant, yet deepening with light
That will be silver soon.

The stars flock fast from corners of the hills
Arrayed in vapour-stuffs, and gems
Of star-dust faint and pale, and slowly fills
A silent host the cope majestic;
Crowning their brows are shining diadems,
And bright to lead them all

Hesperus, Prince, comes forth: now shadows
close

Gradually about; the dark
Will soon be on; oh, that the night repose,
The utter, very night of silence deep,
Would fold me close about, as in an ark
Of rest, that I might sleep.

That I might sleep forever, and the tears
That spring for bitter want and wrong
Be dried, and ever-new returning years
Should with their varied harmonies give me
peace;
Sweet is the slumber, sweet and sound and
long
That sets the soul release.

The skies their evening labour have achieved,
The star-batallions of the night
Have filled their ranks, as when there once conceived
In Bethlehem a woman, and abroad
Annunciation flamed with song, and sight
Of angels sent of God.

And He, that to the wounded gives surcease,
This hour on land and water broods,
And all earth's things await the word of peace,
For over seas and forests, in dead reeds,
Pipe but the Master's tunes, move but His
moods;
He hears me and He heeds.

Hope.

She was one of the flowers of love,
Delicate, lily fair ;
Soft as the breast of a dove
And golden, her hair.

But drooping and dropping and past,
With the leaving of Summer's rose,
Her life fell away and at last
Was laid to repose.

When the flowers once more came by,
Remembrance sweetened my pain,
And I saw in their coming that I
Would see her again.

Sonnet—Welcome.

I bid thee welcome, welcome to my arms;
My heart leans toward thee, tender one of
light,
Yet would I doubly welcome all thy charms
Could I but name thee what I haply might,
But that the lurking dangers of this life
Bid me refrain. I love and wait; in bliss
Of tender paining hope my world-borne strife
Is half-way healed by this embracing kiss;
But not in full till I may sip thy lips
In unrestraining joy, and in thine ear
Whisper, my Love, to thee of the eclipse
Of the frail world's gaudy and bright career,
As I read in those steady eyes of thine
That some day I may call thee wife and mine.

Sonnet—To P.

Hast thou, my Love, the aching in thy breast
I have in mine? It is a yearning pain
Of passion when my heart to thine is lain—
An ache which thy soft surgery can arrest
When I may taste thy ripened sweets, caressed
With love-light, when we are no longer twain,
And love speaks silently that love shall reign
The ruler of the kingdom of the blest.

O, Love, I feel that lingering throb to bring
Thee toward me closer; thou art pressed to me
By that close folding love to which time
bears
No dread of tears or ache; my heart will cling
Thro' woe and joy in love I hold to thee—
A love which falters not nor which time
wears.

Sonnet—The Language of Her Eyes.

Her heart is coloured with her love's desire,
Till rosy radiance rises to her lips
And fills her with an all-consuming fire
That burns upon her cheek and sweetly slips
Into her words—words flushing from her heart
Like flowers from Nature's fulsome summer
sent
In floods of radiance; words that are but part
Of that soft tongue of love's abandonment.

And yet she speaks not with her tongue; her
voice
Is in her eyes, and all their eloquence
Of mute tones stirs her cheek to glow, rejoice,
Her lids to fall in maiden innocence:
The tongue may warp the truth, but from the
eye
The heart's own throbbing bursts, and may not
lie.

Sonnet—Danaë.

My Love, the fairest of the fold of few,
Gives up her beauty of both heart and cheek
To love's abandon, and yet ever new
Are all the treasures that our love may seek ;
The precious treasury of her rarest gift
Is open ever to our love's each need,
And still by some unfathomable thrift
Is filled again to overflowing meed :
For loving is an act of sacred cause
That may not be a niggard of its hoard,
'Tis governed by ungovernable laws
That are the measure that it can afford :
Use makes not love grow weak, but passing time
Steadies the fitful furnace of love's prime.

Passing.

The eyes of our Mother close slowly,
But glaze and are dead at last,
And the part that was earth lies lowly,
And a part to God hath passed.

But because we were made of her blood,
And born into life thro' her pains,
Of the best of her, most that is good
On earth with her children remains.

And the light that we do inherit
In trust for the unborn ones,
Is a spark struck off from her spirit
To kindle the lamps of our sons.

Requiem.

O'er them the stars their vigils keep
And on their grave, where laurel wreathes,
Soft shadows fall, and o'er their sleep
Eternal music breathes.

A silver bark in heavenly seas
The moon in evening glory rides ;
While deep amid the forest trees
A guardian spirit hides ;

And echo moans from distant leas,
And o'er their mould, forever blest,
Autumnal winds sigh harmonies
In hymnal for their rest.

Forgotten.

Forgot me, my Love, for another?—

Well, I only am overcast,

I know what the heart cannot smother,

The sting on the pride may last,

But loving in me is now past.

I lived in a country of dreams, Love,

'Twas a kingdom well fitted to own,

But I've gone to a place that seems, love,

With no queen upon its throne,

A phantom of all I have known.

Forgot me, my Love?—Well, no matter,

For the secret shall rest with me;

'Tis I, only I, who now shatter

The image I made of thee—

And your martyrdom sets you free.

Forget me, my Love, for I left you,
And let pass why I went, forget;
For your own sake think I bereft you,
And then with your eyelids wet
Erase the moment we met.

Forget me in what is your new love,
Aye, bind him with bonds that were mine,
And may he be always your true love,
A heart filled up with the wine
Of a love new pressed from the vine.

The Night-Watch.

The moon shines down on her sleep,
And with broken silver paves
A path in the lapping waves;
And the ocean-sprites sing deep
And sweet in their distant caves.

Lightly my loved one stirs,
And about the wind-sprites veer,
To chase away the fear,
And strew her couch with myrrhs,
Rare odours and balsams clear.

And the far-away low-hung star
Set in the sky's rent veil,
Shimmers in splendour pale,
To beacon us home from afar
And guide our wandering sail.

The Poppy.

Ah! new, still ever new, still ever fair
The face of beauty smiled upon the Earth
In Summer's majesty, and soil o'er flowed
In full maturity. 'Twas then I saw
The languorous poppies nodding, deeply pinned
In the soft golden hair of Earth, which, combed
By the incessant winds, was looped in braids
And lustrous woofs of red. Their brilliant hue
Reflected on the light of day the darts
Of heart-impassioned beauty. Flushing deep—
Dressed in the warmth of love—allurements
shone

In each fold of their mantles; ev'n the seed
That sleeping lay upon their bosoms breathed
Forth languorous love, not spirit love,
But in a deep desire that was unspoken
Yet carried in a mist of unheard throats.
And with the Earth who raised her summer face
And drew to her soft-heaving bosom veiled
With curls, the brightness of the Sun, they spoke
In pleading eloquence: "O, Mother Earth,
I know thy power, I feel it in my veins!

Have mercy, thou who step'st so noiselessly
Into the chariot day, and mercury-winged
Thro' sunlight flashest, soon to reach the House
Of Night where slumber patiently awaits
To charm thee Letheward, and to wrap thee
About with sable dusk clasped at the throat
By the pale moon, and dripping with the stars;
Have mercy; take me not to Night except
Love dwelleth there! Have mercy!" But the
Earth

Heard not; and as each evening fell she loosed
The golden bands which sheaved her hair and
went

Her way unto her quiet rest, and slept.
And thro' the deep folds of the dusk bright eyes
Fired by desire, streamed wide, unseen. Red eyes
They were with weeping, flashing fitful rays
That waned away into a steady glow.
And then the dark Earth seemed a handed cup
Of gloomy opiate whose starry crest
Winked luringly to drain, which stealthily
The Sun drank off with dawn-grey painful lips
Leaving the day.

And still again, and yet
Once more the dark loomed o'er the poppies'
hopes;
The half-faced moon sat stately in the dark

Above the ashes of the day ; and heat
Slow-creeping languished all their limbs
And stole in pain upon their hearts that mourned
To one unseen complainingly : " O, hark !
Deeply let me take in thy passionate gusts,
And live the dreaming life of parted lips
And hasty breath, O, symbol of my heart
Whose orient bloom, yea, truly conquers me.
I love the night but there love comes not ; more,
I love the day, but still I am alone ;
None but my kind live with me ; I am starved
Of love mid beauty ; bring my love to me,
Or give thy breast of luscious sleep that I
May breathe no more." Then silence fell on all ;
Each eye drooped languorously and closed in
death,
And deepened darker hues ; the silent Earth
Wept, drawing to a deep repose, but one
Unseen went strangely by—Great Love his name.

The Song in the Garden.

She is hid in the night and the roses,
Deep in the darkness sweet;
And the light, quick tones of her song
Joyously, heedlessly fleet
To the vault bright-studded with stars,
While the earth grows still at her feet.

And sadly she croons of a love
Inwoven, as all are, with pain;
And the heart of the thicket mourns
Till her voice sings joy again;
Lilting and turning in heavenly bournes
Then falling in pearly rain.

Then bubbling and gurgling like laughter,
The notes come in crystalline trills;
Commingling and breaking and soaring high
Till the heart of the listener thrills;
And the pent breath escapes in a choking sigh
And the eye with mistiness fills.

A Capture.

Listen now, the music soars
Many voiced, sweet and wild ;
Thro' the church's depths it pours,
Hymn and choral, anthems mild,
And from the murmur springing free
A sudden tremor silvery
Darts, a shower of throbbing sounds
To the arches, waking echoes,
From pier to vaulted dome rebounds,
And into quiet goes.

So when we catch a noble thought
And sing it to our inner mind,
The words with precious meaning fraught
Beat thro' Sense's portals blind ;
And in Emotion's brimming cells
The bounding, circling music dwells ;
Rushing thro' the cloisters all
Till the straying thought has gone
Into our soul beyond recall
And has become our own.

Achievement.

The stroller in the thick-set wood
A trill of low bird-music hears
Gush out and die upon the breeze,
And breathlessly about him peers
To spy the songster in the trees,
And waits the small throat's fuller flood ;

Then feels a throb as suddenly
The long cascades of rolling notes
From out the leaf-recesses pour,
And whence the searching music floats
Before away the wild calls soar
For one glad moment he can see.

So must he wait, that in the dark
Of men's and women's souls would seek,
And fearless go without a guide
Or charm to make the stillness speak ;
No light for him till o'er the wide
Expanse of dusk he see the spark.

A long breath drawn upon the sight,
A setting of the teeth anew,
And on that star that rides the sky
As tho' from heaven itself it drew,
Must he gaze steadfastly and high
And pace the watchings of the night.

And after lapse of many hours
And fighting off of heavy sleep,
The star shall burst into full fire
And for an instant so shall keep—
Enough that brief flash to inspire
The poet to divinest powers,

And key his being to the song
And ripe the fruitage of his blood,
And in short time to coin his thought
To virgin gold, so that the flood
Of men that pass, the song he wrought
Shall hear with joy and listen long.

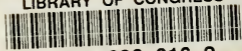
And so, as creep a violin's
Strong human tones to greedy ears,
From out a quiet curtained room
To stir and soothe tumultuous tears
And hold out comfort for the doom
Of death, that final victory wins,

The words he forged with sighs and pains,
With strong admixture of his blood,
Shall for sweet hope and noble thought
Gush ever in a steady flood,
With pregnant seed and harvest fraught
As pour Spring's vivifying rains.

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